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Chairman: Mr. Toscano (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Switzerland)

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In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Agenda item 38: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources *(continued)* (A/C.2/60/L.11)

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.11

1. **Mr. Elfarnawany** (Egypt) said that the sponsors had been joined by Cuba.

2. The draft resolution embodied a number of accepted international principles relating to the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources, and was guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and a number of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, and other principles generally associated with international legitimacy. The aim was to ameliorate a severely deteriorating situation.

Agenda item 53: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/60/8, Supplement No. 8, A/60/168 and A/60/347-E/2005/60)

3. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)) said that Member States accorded growing importance to a variety of human settlement issues as set out in the Habitat Agenda and redefined in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. The report of the twentieth session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT (A/60/8) stressed the need for the international community to focus on the critical issues of rapid urbanization and the concomitant urban poverty crisis. Many of those issues, covered in Governing Council resolutions, had recently been restated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

4. A combination of factors made the growing numbers of urban poor the most disempowered in terms of poverty and access to health and education and the most vulnerable to disease, representing the collective failure to cope with rapid urbanization and the consequences of globalization. Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals depended increasingly on the ability of Governments and their civil society partners to make cities and towns more equitable and inclusive. The battle for those Goals would be won or lost in cities and towns.

5. Pursuant to General Assembly and Governing Council resolutions in support of Goal 7, to ensure environmental sustainability, considerable progress had been made on establishing the Slum Upgrading Facility. Still at the design stage, it had received initial funding of $20 million from the Governments of the United Kingdom and Sweden and had been operational in 15 African and Asian cities for over a year. Designed to work with Governments, slum-dwellers and local financial institutions to mobilize investments, it would use innovative methods for financing pro-poor urban development with emphasis on domestic capital, and combined technical assistance and seed funding to broker partnerships and create financial packages for slum upgrading and urban infrastructure development. The first credit guarantee pilot scheme, implemented in the United Republic of Tanzania with women's housing cooperatives, had already yielded a 1:4 leverage ratio: for every $1 guaranteed by the Facility, a commercial bank lent $4 to low-income borrowers, thus demonstrating the huge potential for pro-poor housing finance.

6. The Water and Sanitation Trust Fund had been launched and was already in receipt of $50 million from the Governments of Norway, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden; it would mobilize international finance and investment in relevant pro-poor projects through a judicious mix of grants and loans. It had raised over $1 billion for improving water and sanitation in informal settlements in more than 30 African and Asian cities; it also supported "quick-impact initiatives" for achieving, within five years, the Millennium Declaration water and sanitation targets in secondary towns in two major transnational water basins: the Lake Victoria basin and the Greater Mekong river basin. China and Thailand were also contributing to the latter project.

7. Both projects, executed in close collaboration with the World Bank group, the African and Asian Development Banks and key bilateral donors, showed that a wide range of partners could be mobilized for those targets, including local authorities and civil

society. They were, however, only demonstration initiatives that would need considerable expansion in the next five years in order to accelerate and sustain global achievement of the targets. In that regard, emphasis was placed on capacity-building, management of municipalities and upgraded neighbourhoods, and water and sanitation services. In that connection, she thanked the Governments that had supported the initiatives, and urged others to do likewise to facilitate implementation of the Habitat Agenda and Millennium Development Goal 7.

8. The slum challenge was growing: it was predicted that the current figure of one billion persons living in slums would double by 2030. Despite the conclusion of the *2005 Global Report on Human Settlements* that woefully inadequate pro-poor housing investment reflected a singular lack of attention to the urbanization of poverty, she had consistently failed to impress on policy-makers the extent of the urban development crisis. Urban planning, housing and shelter issues were barely discussed. She therefore urged Governments to work with the Habitat programme managers in order to mainstream the slum challenge and sustainable urban development, and to support their financial viability through multiyear contributions. The UN-HABITAT country presence would be assessed with a view to its integration into the medium-term strategy and international plan.

9. With UN-HABITAT support and African Union sponsorship and formal endorsement, the first session of the biennial African Ministers Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) had been held in January 2005 in Durban. The Conference would be the regional consultative mechanism for achieving the Habitat Agenda goals and accelerating Africa's attainment of the internationally agreed development goals. Consultations for the finalization of the first Asian and Pacific ministerial conference in 2006 were under way, and UN-HABITAT was facilitating the exchange of experiences between AMCHUD and the Lead Authorities of Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI). That event, together with one planned for Asia in 2006, could contribute greatly to the implementation of paragraph 30, on South-South cooperation, of the Summit Outcome.

10. In terms of overall advocacy, the third session of the World Urban Forum, scheduled for June 2006, would be hosted by the Government of Canada, with the main theme of sustainable urban development. It would unquestionably raise awareness of the urban agenda among a wide range of Government and local and civil society representatives. For a related forthcoming 72-hour Internet event, the World Bank would be providing video conferencing facilities to enable people the world over from all walks of life, slum dwellers included, to voice their views on issues facing a rapidly urbanizing planet.

11. Concerning the ongoing global campaigns on secure tenure and good governance, the eradication of urban poverty and the realization of the Habitat Agenda goal of "shelter for all" could be realized only through recognition of the "right to the city" of the urban poor. Although slums, because of their informal nature, were illegal and denied basic infrastructure and public services, they represented the stake of the urban poor in society. The essence of those campaigns and the normative work on human settlements was to transform that tenuous stake and social capital into a tangible asset for releasing the urban poor from the vicious cycle of poverty. In that spirit, and following a rights-based approach to housing, UN-HABITAT and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continued to implement the United Nations Housing Rights Programme.

12. The series of disasters in 2005 had resulted in dramatic loss of life, property and livelihoods, and the displacement of entire communities. Notwithstanding the international community's generous and prompt response, the scale of destruction had shown that prevention and the sustainable recovery of victims' homes and livelihoods hinged on sustainable human settlement planning and management: adoption and enforcement of more appropriate land-use planning and building codes, and humanitarian relief operations conceived from the outset as a bridge to development. The number and plight of internally displaced persons and their lengthy stays in makeshift accommodation required sustainable solutions that combined short-term emergency action with the longer-term development agenda. In collaboration with its partners, UN-HABITAT had developed a conceptual framework and operational guidelines, entitled "Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction".

13. UN-HABITAT had been invited to participate in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Agencies (ECHA) and in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group (IASC-WG) in Geneva. It was

committed to assuming a larger role in strengthening the United Nations collective response to shelter, land and property challenges in post-disaster situations and to promote implementation of paragraph 132, pertaining to internally displaced persons, of the Summit Outcome. She appealed to the Committee to facilitate full UN-HABITAT membership of IASC in the interests of its humanitarian work.

14. The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its thirteenth session, had focused on water, sanitation and human settlements, the three pillars of sustainable development. Its findings were reflected in paragraph 56 (m) of the Summit Outcome and emphasized, for the first time, the importance of slum prevention. She urged countries in a position to do so to provide sites on which slum-dwellers could build.

15. During the five years that she had been Executive Director, financial contributions to UN-HABITAT had quadrupled; she thanked the Member States which had made that possible. However, those funds had come from a handful of countries. She therefore urged the Committee to ensure that, in the current reform of the United Nations, UN-HABITAT would be allowed to operate on the same principle of voluntary assessed contributions as the United Nations Environment Programme, also headquartered in Nairobi.

16. **Ms. Mills** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group remained committed to the human settlement targets, including slum upgrading. Convinced that the most fundamental and sustainable solution to the human settlements dilemma was poverty reduction through expanded employment and market access for the goods and services of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, it acknowledged the significance of the urban dimension of poverty eradication and the need to integrate water and sanitation issues in a broad-based approach to human settlements. That required not only appropriate national macroeconomic polices, but also facilitative international policies.

17. The high levels of persistent poverty and disease and the growing frequency and scale of natural disasters, particularly in developing countries, not only implied a reduction in capacity, but suggested that much of the investment in human settlements would be needed for replacing facilities rather than adding to their stock.

18. The constraints on many developing countries included scant resources and claims for debt servicing; the international community must therefore keep its promise to support their efforts, providing them with the requisite resources, increased capacity, technology transfer and an enabling environment.

19. There was a critical need for increased and predictable financial contributions to the United Nations Human Settlements Foundation for timely global implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the water, sanitation and slum-upgrading Millennium Declaration goals. The Group of 77 and China called for financial support to UN-HABITAT through increased non-specific contributions and invited Governments to provide multiyear funding for programme implementation and capitalization of the Programme and its Slum Upgrading Facility.

20. **Ms. Liu** Zhongxin (China) said that the major Habitat II goals concerning the provision of adequate shelter for all, and sustainable human settlements, could be achieved only through effective national efforts, and enhanced international cooperation in a sound external environment.

21. The comprehensive implementation of the Habitat Agenda required action that respected the domestic circumstances of countries and their autonomy in decision-making. Such action should also incorporate sustainable development as an overarching principle, with the full participation of all sectors of society.

22. In addition to pursuing the specific Millennium Development Goals on human settlements, the Chinese Government had stepped up its efforts in the area of urban and rural housing reform, and had accelerated the pace of housing construction. Within the context of urban and rural development, a variety of measures had been adopted in order to accord top priority to housing and human settlements development.

23. At present, China had an urbanization rate of 40.5 per cent and had entered a rapid stage of development. Housing conditions and the rights and interests of the general public, particularly with regard to low- and middle-income families, had considerably improved. The Government was also intensifying efforts to formulate and implement nationwide ecological and environmental protection programmes, at the regional

and municipal levels, and to boost the protection of nature reserves and scenic spots, with a view to coordinating and accommodating urban and regional economic and social development, resource development and use, and the protection of natural and cultural environments. The Government had instituted an incentive award to honour towns, institutions and individuals that made outstanding contributions to the improvement of human settlements and to encourage local governments in the integrated management of the ecological environment.

24. China was ready to strengthen exchanges with other countries in the development of human settlements, in an effort to further implement the Habitat Agenda and attain the Millennium Development Goals, for the improvement of human settlements everywhere.

25. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) acknowledged the contribution made by UN-Habitat to disaster mitigation, post-conflict assistance, technical assistance and cooperation at the country level. Accelerated and concerted efforts at the international level were needed to improve the lives of slum dwellers and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and targets of the Habitat Agenda.

26. The need for pro-poor policies focusing on tenure security and access to affordable housing was greater than ever. The thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit had recognized the need for a multisector, multiactor integrated approach to water, sanitation and human settlements, and, to that end, the Summit had further appealed for the urgent provision of increased resources.

27. He made a number of recommendations for securing a results-oriented integrated approach and for strengthening UN-Habitat. Those proposals included the expansion of technical assistance to developing countries, identification of disaster-prone areas and mitigation strategies, the improvement of inter-agency cooperation and the introduction of an effective balance in the normative and operational activities of UN-HABITAT.

28. With specific reference to the domestic situation, he drew attention to the challenges of urbanization facing Pakistan, which had a 4 per cent annual growth rate in its urban population, and outlined some of the measures taken by the Government to address the increased need for housing units. The earthquake that had struck parts of Pakistan and Kashmir in October 2005 had caused more than 55,000 deaths and the complete destruction of the physical infrastructure of the affected region. With the assistance and support of the international community, his Government had made a determined effort to undertake the task of reconstruction in a coordinated fashion.

29. He expressed the hope that the 2006 session of the World Urban Forum would increase global partnerships and enhance the implementation of Millennium Development Goal number 7, and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the implementation of its international obligations to promote sustainable development.

30. **Ms. Ovcharenko** (Russian Federation) said that international cooperation on human settlements was an extremely important component of the global sustainable development agenda. The Russian Federation supported the policy of gradually strengthening the role of UN-HABITAT as a key United Nations agency in the field of human settlements, and noted with satisfaction the progress made towards achieving the Habitat Agenda and goals on human settlement established in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. She expressed support for efforts made within the Programme to advance global campaigns to guarantee the right to housing and to monitor the achievement of sustainable development goals, including eliminating slums and ensuring access to safe drinking water.

31. She also drew attention to urgent issues such as the decentralization of urban management, strengthening local self-governing bodies, the involvement of civil society, mitigation of the consequences of natural and man-made disasters, and delivery of humanitarian relief and assistance in post-conflict reconstruction. Rising rates of urbanization and the persistence of serious economic problems in many regions had created a need for the international community to take additional steps to improve the effectiveness of the work of UN-Habitat.

32. The Russian Federation was convinced of the importance of cooperation between UN-HABITAT and the United Nations agencies and institutions and of expanded interaction with the Bretton Woods

institutions, and welcomed the establishment of the post of Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.

33. Underscoring the significance of the regional and country dimensions to the problems incurred in implementing the Habitat Agenda, she said that her delegation fully acknowledged the great need in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but that access to safe drinking water, sanitation and the guarantee of sustainable urbanization were also acutely critical issues for countries with economies in transition. A balanced approach in the work programme of UN-HABITAT would promote interaction with Central and East European countries. Likewise, greater attention should be given to the human settlement needs of countries in the far north and Arctic regions. In conclusion, she highlighted the celebration of World Habitat Day and other initiatives that drew the attention of the world to a broad range of problems and provided an integrated approach to their solution.

34. **Mr. Swajaya** (Indonesia) said that the international community shared the resolve to provide safe, healthy and sustainable human settlements for all. Poverty, the negative impact of globalization, population growth and natural disasters directly affected the quality of human settlements, and required strong commitment and tangible action. However, most developing countries faced serious financial, technological and institutional constraints in responding to those challenges. The mobilization of resources was therefore critical to implementing the Habitat Agenda. In that connection, Indonesia welcomed the Human Settlements Financing Division launched by UN-Habitat, providing the Foundation with an operational platform to mobilize resources at the country level.

35. Efforts must be strengthened to implement the Habitat Agenda to ensure the sustainable development of cities. Indonesia was pleased to have hosted the celebration of World Habitat Day on 3 October 2005 in Jakarta, with the theme "Millennium Development Goals and the City". On that occasion, attention had been focused on the role of local government and the need to develop decent low-cost housing. In connection with the event, the Government of Indonesia had launched two national programmes on housing improvement and urban poverty reduction, which were expected to raise the living standards of two million slum-dwellers in 32 cities, and had launched a public awareness campaign on the pertinent Millennium Development Goals.

36. The celebrations had also provided an opportunity to highlight the relief offered to survivors of the tsunami disaster and the reconstruction spearheaded by UN-HABITAT in Aceh and Nias. The rehabilitation and reconstruction agency, established by the Government, had been responsible for designing and overseeing a coordinated, community-driven reconstruction and development programme. Indonesia greatly appreciated the support of United Nations organizations, including UN-HABITAT, the donor community and the private sector in mobilizing financial resources for shelter and community rehabilitation in the disaster areas. A number of consultations and preliminary assessments had already been conducted and over 50,000 reconstructed homes were envisaged, with units at varying stages of completion.

37. **Ms. Vrcan** (Croatia) said that Croatia had fully supported upgrading the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to programme status in 2002 and welcomed the overall positive evaluation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Croatia had established the National Habitat Committee as a broad-based platform for national and local-level preparation and implementation of plans of action based on the Habitat Agenda. The rapid growth of cities required a comprehensive sustainable development plan that took into consideration the ecological, economic and social dimensions and the National Habitat Committee was preparing guidelines for the housing policy to be included in the country's new development strategy.

38. A publicly funded housing programme had been set up in 2000 with the twofold objective of improving housing conditions and developing the construction industry. To date, more than 100 cities had made use of the programme and over 11,000 apartments had been constructed according to standards set by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

39. With a 4,000 kilometre-long coastline and over 1,000 islands, of which 47 were inhabited, Croatia was particularly aware of the need to protect its coastal zone and, in September 2004, the Government had adopted regulations designed to protect the cultural and natural values of the coastal area, while ensuring appropriate measures of environmental protection.

40. Croatia counted on the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to provide guidance in future capacity-building endeavours to support its sustainable urbanization policies at the country and local levels, in coordination and cooperation with other relevant United Nations agencies.

41. **Mr. Yadav** (India) said that his Government's 1998 National Housing and Habitat Policy recognized housing not merely as a material asset but as part of an overall sustainable living habitat. India sought to achieve the target of housing for all by 2007, using a facilitating approach involving legal reforms, fiscal incentives and transfer of technology. The large and growing urban population augured a shortage of shelter and associated infrastructure, and the growth of slums. Substantial work had begun to upgrade infrastructure, and measures had been taken to increase the availability of urban land so that prices would fall, making shelter affordable to the poor. In an increasingly urban world, the people's well-being depended on urban problems being tackled in an appropriate manner.

42. The developing countries needed financial and technical assistance for their efforts to eradicate poverty, create durable economic infrastructure and provide food security to the poor in both urban and rural areas. India was considering a programme to provide urban amenities in rural areas, so as to improve the quality of life in such areas and reduce migration to urban centres. Several Government policies and programmes were designed to improve employment and livelihood opportunities in rural areas. An integrated rural development programme started in 1978 offered subsidies and bank credit to the rural poor, and included a training component as well as technical assistance. In urban areas, the draft national slum policy endorsed upgrading and improvement rather than slum clearance.

43. The international community should develop funding instruments to provide long-term funding for national institutions engaged in financing the housing needs of the poor. Traditional methods of collateral-supported institutional finance instruments did not address the problem adequately. Innovative responses were needed to meet the human settlements target and India had been developing schemes for cost-effective, environment-friendly housing construction technologies; projects for remote backward and disaster-affected areas were a priority, with attention being given to developing plans for reducing the impact of natural disasters.

44. International cooperation to provide financial and technical assistance, including technology transfer, should receive the highest priority if the developing countries were to achieve the target agreed at the Millennium Summit. India was willing to continue sharing appropriate technology, particularly in the field of appropriate housing construction technologies, within the framework of South-South cooperation.

45. **Mr. Omene** (Nigeria) said the Global Report on Human Settlements for 2005 had shed light on the broad contextual issues underlying the achievement of sustainable housing. Efficient housing systems had to be complemented with reductions in housing costs and increases in income levels, and the State would have to continue to play a role in supporting long-term lending to mitigate the risks associated with short-term loans in the housing industry. Currently, in many developing countries, the availability of long-term finance was very limited, while the cost of short-term lending was beyond the reach of the poor. Thus, support should be provided for the participation of the State, not as the primary provider of shelter, but as a facilitator, through instruments such as credit guarantee schemes, social housing and targeted subsidies.

46. His Government was implementing the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, a reform programme that sought to place Nigeria on the path to economic rebirth and sustainable development. It hoped the international community would provide financial and technical assistance.

47. The United Nations Human Settlement Programme required adequate and predictable financial resources to fulfil its mandate and support developing countries in realizing their human settlement objectives. While the 30 per cent increase in voluntary contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation was to be commended, concern remained about the major imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions and there was an urgent need to reverse the current pattern of contributions, which was skewed in favour of earmarked funds. Without external support, the poor in

developing countries would not be able to afford adequate shelter.

48. The activities of the Habitat Programme Managers would promote the integration of the global and normative mandate, programmes and campaigns of UN-HABITAT. Accordingly, Nigeria had a Habitat Programme Support Office and a Habitat Programme Manager. Policy coherence, coordination and consistency was needed at the global level. Policies needed to be supportive of development, and reform measures should foster economic growth, poverty eradication, employment, social inclusion and empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

49. **Mr. Karanja** (Kenya) said that UN-HABITAT was not able to function as a full-fledged programme because of inadequate and unpredictable funding of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, stemming from the imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions, as well as dependence on a small number of donors. The international community and financial institutions should increase their voluntary non-earmarked contributions to the Foundation, preferably on a multi-year basis. They should also support the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund and the Slum Upgrading Facility to help developing countries mobilize public investment and private capital for slum upgrading, shelter and basic services. It would be desirable to issue a complete package of operational financial rules and regulations in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

50. Water, sanitation and slum upgrading targets needed to be addressed in an integrated manner. Furthermore, UN-HABITAT needed to undertake an immediate evaluation of the performance and impact of the Habitat Programme Managers, as recommended by both the twentieth session of its Governing Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Kenya welcomed the outcome of the meeting of the African Ministers of Housing and Urban Development held in Durban, South Africa, in February 2005, especially the establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) to serve as a consultative mechanism on the promotion of sustainable development of human settlements in Africa, under the auspices of the African Union. He urged the international community to support that initiative, which would be critical in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and of the Millennium Development Goals.

51. Man-made and natural disasters had considerably reduced the gains made in the area of human settlements, causing loss of life, destruction of property and untold human suffering. To mitigate the impact of disasters, the international community should provide financial and technical assistance to governments in their efforts to establish early-warning systems. UN-HABITAT had wide experience in disaster mitigation and post-conflict assistance. The Secretary-General should therefore involve it in the activities of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on disaster and humanitarian affairs and mainstream its best practices into the Peacebuilding Commission.

52. At the national level, his Government, in collaboration with stakeholders, including UN-HABITAT, had committed itself, through the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme, to systematically upgrade slums in all the urban areas and thus improve the lives and living conditions of some 5.4 million people. He urged Kenya's development partners to support the Government's efforts by contributing to the Kenya Slum Upgrading, Low Cost Housing and Infrastructure Fund. Furthermore, the Government was finalizing a national housing bill to regulate and monitor the housing and human settlements sector; a range of incentives to make it easier for housing developers and other partners to develop more affordable housing; and a national land policy aimed at better land utilization and management.

53. **Mr. Logan** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the natural disasters of the past few months were only a reminder of how critical sustainable urban planning and construction were to reducing vulnerability and risk, especially in hazardous locations. Construction site planning and city development must be guided by a disaster-prevention culture with adequate water, sanitation and waste management to ensure a healthy environment and reduce or avoid diseases and epidemics. Red Cross and Red Crescent societies worldwide had implemented community-based settlement programmes that contributed to that objective, both during and after disasters and as longer-term activities.

54. Protecting lives in disasters was first and foremost a task of governments, with the Red Cross

and Red Crescent societies playing auxiliary roles. When settlements were destroyed, one of the first priorities was to quickly establish emergency shelter. IFRC had long responded to such demands through the rapid provision of tents and other emergency solutions. In that regard it was applying lessons learned in the aftermath of a variety of natural disasters by increasingly expanding its activities in early-recovery housing, including the provision of transitional homes and the reconstruction of destroyed settlements in consultation with UN-HABITAT, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The importance of disaster preparedness and risk reduction had been reflected in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action of the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2003.

55. Adequate planning and construction to prepare for the unexpected should include cost-effective flood, earthquake and storm disaster resistance, which were effective means to prevent the future loss of the limited resources of the poor. In creating a national plan, a system for disaster-risk management, including a risk-reduction element, was critical. The most vulnerable populations required particular attention, as poverty often forced them to live in fragile settlements in the most hazardous locations. Poor people were often more prone to disease and disasters because of where they lived and their circumstances; they also had a more limited access to social-support systems. Improving their lives must start with vulnerability and risk reduction, resilience and capacity-building. Preparing for disasters, particularly those occurring in densely populated urban areas, mitigating their effects and responding to their consequences required cooperation by a broad range of actors, including the United Nations, civil society and international organizations, such as IFRC, if the collective objective of creating resilient, well-protected and well-organized communities was to become a reality.

56. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)) said that she was encouraged by the clear awareness of the issues at hand and the recognition that much remained to be done in order for UN-HABITAT to fulfil its mandate of coordinating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In that regard, Member States should advocate UN-HABITAT membership of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. She was particularly encouraged by the statement from IFRC, one of the key actors in emergency shelter. Referring to her recent trips to tsunami- and earthquake-affected areas in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, respectively, she noted that those areas were facing daunting housing construction challenges that could have been averted had proper construction codes been in place.

Agenda item 73: Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance (*continued*)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions (*continued*)
(A/C.2/60/L.4/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.4/Rev.1 on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan.

57. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the delegations of Burkina Faso, Brazil, Congo, Cyprus, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Lesotho, Madagascar, Senegal and the United Republic of Tanzania had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, and that it had no programme budget implications.

58. *Draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.4/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.7/Rev.1 on humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for Ethiopia

59. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

60. **Mr. Tekelegn** (Ethiopia) informed the Committee that the delegations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Brazil, Cyprus, El Salvador, the Gambia, Germany, Grenada, India, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Spain, Uganda, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at noon.